



Health Care Aides: *Helping Those in Need*

The Standard Occupational Classification Manual has two listings for home health care aides: one in the major group Healthcare Support called home health aide and the other in Personal Care and Services Occupations called personal and home care aides.

Most of the duties in these two jobs are similar; the difference in the job classifications occur based on who employs them.

Home health aides typically work for certified home health or hospice agencies that receive government funding and therefore must comply with regulations from those entities in order to receive funding. This means they must work under the direct supervision of a medical professional, usually a registered nurse. These aides keep records of services performed and of patients' condition and progress, which is then reported to the supervisor or case manager.

Personal and home care aides—also called homemakers, caregivers, companions and personal attendants—work for various public and private agencies that provide home care services. In these agencies, caregivers are usually supervised by a licensed nurse, social worker, or a non-medical manager. Personal and home care aides work more independently, receiving only periodic visits from their supervisors. Some aides are hired directly by the patient or the patient's family.

Workers in both jobs help people who are in need of assistance to live in their homes or in residential facilities instead of health facilities or institutions. They also assist people in hospices and day programs and help those with disabilities go to work and remain engaged in their communities. Most aides work with elderly or physically or mentally disabled patients who need more care than family or friends can provide.

A typical day for most aides consists of physically demanding work. They move patients in and out of bed and help them stand or walk. Because aides working in a patient's home may not have access to mechanical lifting devices, the incidence of injuries from overexertion are high. Emptying bedpans, changing

soiled bedding, and disoriented or irritable patients also are part of an aide's day. Evening, weekend and holiday work is often required. Job satisfaction comes from helping those who cannot help themselves.

A high school diploma is not required for these jobs. Aides are usually trained by registered nurses or their supervisors who teach them cooking, housekeeping tasks, how to respond to an emergency, and professional conduct. An aide who works for an agency that receives Medicare or Medicaid reimbursement must receive a minimum of seventy-five hours of training and pass a competency evaluation or state certification program.

Aides may take a competency test to become certified without taking any of the training. At a minimum, sixteen hours of supervised practical training are required before an aide has direct contact with a patient.

Employment of home health aides is projected to grow by 50 percent between 2008 and 2018, which is much faster than the average for all occupations. This growth is due to the projected rise in the number of elderly people who will need assistance with daily activities. ⓘ

Resources:

- www.bls.gov
- <http://jobs.utah.gov>

Utah Wages for Home Health Aides		
Hourly Inexperienced	Annual Inexperienced	Annual Median
\$8.27	\$17,200	\$20,850

Utah Wages for Personal and Home Care Aides		
Hourly Inexperienced	Annual Inexperienced	Annual Median
\$7.90	\$16,440	\$18,790